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SERIES

JUNE

VOL.  
29

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# All the Year Round

a  
Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

PART 163.

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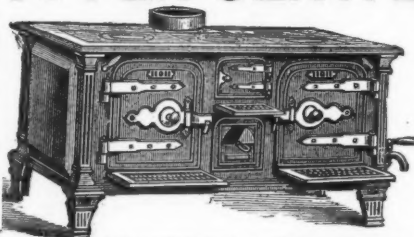


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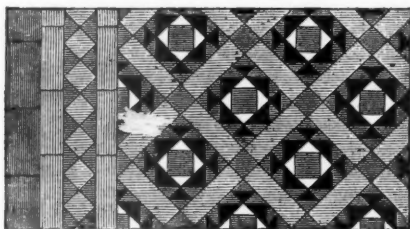
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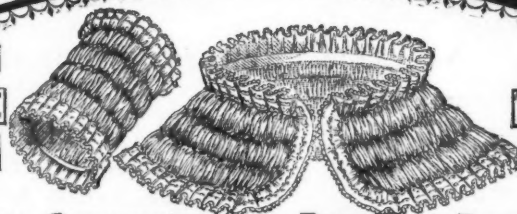
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NO. 705. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, JUNE 3, 1882.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

## MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

### CHAPTER III. HARRY ANNESLEY.

TOGETHER with Augustus Scarborough at Cambridge had been one Harry Annesley, and he it was to whom the captain in his wrath had sworn to put an end if he should come between him and his love. Harry Annesley had been introduced to the captain by his brother, and an intimacy had grown up between them. He had brought him to Tretton Park when Florence was there, and Harry had since made his own way to Cheltenham, and had endeavoured to plead his own cause after his own fashion. This he had done after the good old English plan which is said to be somewhat loutish, but is not without its efficacy. He had looked at her, and danced with her, and done the best with his gloves and his cravat, and had let her see by twenty unmistakable signs that in order to be perfectly happy he must be near her. Her gloves, and her flowers, and her other little properties were sweeter to him than any scents, and were more valuable in his eyes than precious stones. But he had never as yet actually asked her to love him. But she was so quick a linguist that she had understood down to the last letter what all these tokens had meant. Her cousin, Captain Scarborough, was to her magnificent, powerful, but terrible withal. She had asked herself a thousand times whether it would be possible for her to love him and to become his wife. She had never quite given even to herself an answer to this question till she had suddenly found herself enabled to do so by his over confidence in asking her to confess that she loved him. She had never acknowledged anything, even to herself, as

to Harry Annesley. She had never told herself that it would be possible that he should ask her any such question. She had a wild, dreamy, fearful feeling that, although it would be possible to her to refuse her cousin, that it would be impossible that she should marry any other while he should still be desirous of making her his wife. And now Captain Scarborough had threatened Harry Annesley, not indeed by name, but still clearly enough. Any dream of her own in that direction must be a vain dream.

As Harry Annesley is going to be, what is generally called, the hero of this story, it is necessary that something should be said of the particulars of his life and existence up to this period. There will be found to be nothing very heroic about him. He is a young man with more than a fair allowance of a young man's folly—it may also be said of a young man's weakness. But I myself am inclined to think that there was but little of a young man's selfishness, with nothing of falseness or dishonesty; and I am therefore tempted to tell his story.

He was the son of a clergyman, and the eldest of a large family of children. But as he was the acknowledged heir to his mother's brother, who was the squire of the parish of which his father was rector, it was not thought necessary that he should follow any profession. This uncle was the Squire of Buston, and was, after all, not a rich man himself. His whole property did not exceed two thousand a year, an income which fifty years since was supposed to be sufficient for the moderate wants of a moderate country gentleman; but though Buston be not very far removed from the centre of everything, being in Hertfordshire and not more than forty miles from London, Mr. Prosper lived so retired a life, and was

so far removed from the ways of men, that he apparently did not know but that his heir was as completely entitled to lead an idle life as though he were son of a duke or a brewer. It must not, however, be imagined that Mr. Prosper was especially attached to his nephew. When the boy left the Charterhouse, where his uncle had paid his school-bills, he was sent to Cambridge with an allowance of two hundred and fifty pounds a year, and that allowance was still continued to him with an assurance that under no circumstances could it ever be increased. At college he had been successful, and left Cambridge with a college fellowship. He therefore left it with one hundred and seventy-five pounds added to his income, and was considered by all those at Buston Rectory to be a rich young man. But Harry did not find that his combined income amounted to riches amidst a world of idleness. At Buston he was constantly told by his uncle of the necessity of economy. Indeed, Mr. Prosper, who was a sickly little man about fifty years of age, always spoke of himself as though he intended to live for another half century. He rarely walked across the park to the rectory, and once a week, on Sundays, entertained the rectory family. A sad occasion it generally was to the elder of the rectory children, who were thus doomed to abandon the loud pleasantries of their own home for the sober Sunday solemnities of the Hall. It was not that the Squire of Buston was peculiarly a religious man, or that the rector was the reverse; but the parson was joyous whereas the other was solemn. The squire, who never went to church because he was supposed to be ill, made up for the deficiency by his devotional tendencies when the children were at the Hall. He read through a sermon after dinner, unintelligibly and even inaudibly. At this his brother-in-law, who had an evening service in his own church, of course never was present; but Mrs. Annesley and the girls were there, and the younger children. But Harry Annesley had absolutely declined, and his uncle having found out that he never attended the church service although he always left the Hall with his father, made this a ground for a quarrel. It at last came to pass that Mr. Prosper, who was jealous and irritable, would hardly speak to his nephew; but the two hundred and fifty pounds went on with many bickerings on the subject between the parson and the squire. Once when the squire spoke of discon-

tinuing it, Harry's father reminded him that the young man had been brought up in absolute idleness in conformity with his uncle's desire. This the squire denied in strong language; but Harry had not hitherto run loudly in debt, nor kicked over the traces very outrageously, and as he absolutely must be the heir, the allowance was permitted to go on.

There was one lady who conceived all manner of bad things as to Harry Annesley, because, as she alleged, of the want of a profession and of any fixed income. Mrs. Mountjoy, Florence's mother, was this lady. Florence herself had read every word in Harry's language, not knowing, indeed, that she had read anything, but still never having missed a single letter. Mrs. Mountjoy also had read a good deal, though not all, and dreaded the appearance of Harry as a declared lover. In her eyes Captain Scarborough was a very handsome, very powerful, and very grand personage; but she feared that Florence was being induced to refuse her allegiance to this sovereign by the interference of her other very indifferent suitor. What would be Buston and two thousand a year, as compared with all the glories and limitless income of the great Tretton property? Captain Scarborough with his moustachios and magnificence was just the man who would be sure to become a peer. She had always heard the income fixed at thirty thousand a year. What would a few debts signify to thirty thousand a year? Such had been her thoughts up to the period of Captain Scarborough's late visit, when he had come to Cheltenham, and had renewed his demand for Florence's hand somewhat roughly. He had spoken ambiguous words, dreadful words, declaring that an internecine quarrel had taken place between him and his father; but these words, though they had been very dreadful, had been altogether misunderstood by Mrs. Mountjoy. The property she knew to be entailed, and she knew that when a property was entailed the present owner of it had nothing to do with its future disposition. Captain Scarborough at any rate was anxious for the marriage, and Mrs. Mountjoy was inclined to accept him, encumbered as he now was with his father's wrath, in preference to poor Harry Annesley.

In June Harry came up to London, and there learnt at his club the singular story in regard to old Mr. Scarborough and his

son. Mr. Scarborough had declared his son to be illegitimate, and all the world knew now that he was utterly penniless and hopelessly in debt. That he had been greatly embarrassed Harry had known for many months, and added to that was now the fact, very generally believed, that he was not and never had been the heir to Tretton Park. All that still increasing property about Tretton, on which so many hopes had been founded, would belong to his brother. Harry, as he heard the tale, immediately connected it with Florence. He had, of course, known that the captain was a suitor to the girl's hand, and there had been a time when he thought that his own hopes were consequently vain. Gradually the conviction dawned upon him that Florence did not love the grand warrior, that she was afraid of him rather, and awe-struck. It would be terrible now were she brought to marry him by this feeling of awe. Then he learnt that the warrior had gone down to Cheltenham, and in the restlessness of his spirit he pursued him. When he reached Cheltenham the warrior had already gone.

"The property is certainly entailed," said Mrs. Mountjoy. He had called at once at the house and saw the mother, but Florence was discreetly sent away to her own room when the dangerous young man was admitted.

"He is not Mr. Scarborough's eldest son at all," said Harry; "that is, in the eye of the law." Then he had to undertake that task, very difficult for a young man, of explaining to her all the circumstances of the case.

But there was something in them so dreadful to the lady's imagination that he failed for a long time to make her comprehend it. "Do you mean to say that Mr. Scarborough was not married to his own wife?"

"Not at first."

"And that he knew it?"

"No doubt he knew it. He confesses as much himself."

"What a very wicked man he must be," said Mrs. Mountjoy. Harry could only shrug his shoulder. "And he meant to rob Augustus all through?" Harry again shrugged his shoulder. "Is it not much more probable that if he could be so very wicked he would be willing to deny his eldest son in order to save paying the debts?"

Harry could only declare that the facts were as he told them, or at least that all London believed them to be so, that at

any rate Captain Mountjoy had gambled so recklessly as to put himself for ever and ever out of reach of a shilling of the property, and that it was clearly the duty of Mrs. Mountjoy, as Florence's mother, not to accept him as a suitor.

It was only by slow degrees that the conversation had arrived at this pass. Harry had never as yet declared his own love either to the mother or daughter, and now appeared simply as a narrator of this terrible story. But at this point it did appear to him that he must introduce himself in another guise.

"The fact is, Mrs. Mountjoy," he said, starting to his feet, "that I am in love with your daughter myself."

"And therefore you have come here to vilify Captain Scarborough."

"I have come," said he, "at any rate to tell the truth. If it be as I say you cannot think it right that he should marry your daughter. I say nothing of myself, but that at any rate cannot be."

"It is no business of yours, Mr. Annesley."

"Except that I would fain think that her business should be mine."

But he could not prevail with Mrs. Mountjoy, either on this day or on the next, to allow him to see Florence, and at last was obliged to leave Cheltenham without having done so.

#### CHAPTER IV. CAPTAIN SCARBOROUGH'S DISAPPEARANCE.

A FEW days after the visits to Cheltenham, described in the last chapters, Harry Annesley, coming down a passage by the side of the Junior United Service Club into Charles Street, suddenly met Captain Scarborough at two o'clock in the morning. Where Harry had been at that hour need not now be explained, but it may be presumed that he had not been drinking tea with any of his female relatives.

Captain Scarborough had just come out of some neighbouring club, where he had certainly been playing, and where, to all appearances, he had been drinking also. That there should have been no policemen in the street was not remarkable, but there was no one else there present to give any account of what took place during the five minutes in which the two men remained together. Harry, who was at the moment surprised by the encounter, would have passed the captain by without notice, had he been allowed to do so; but this the captain perceived, and stopped him suddenly, taking him roughly by the collar of



his coat. This Harry naturally resented, and before a word of intelligible explanation had been given, the two young men had quarrelled.

Captain Scarborough had received a long letter from Mrs. Mountjoy, praying for explanation of circumstances which could not be explained, and stating over and over again that all her information had come from Harry Annesley.

The captain now called him an interfering meddlesome idiot, and shook him violently while holding him in his grasp. This was a usage which Harry was not the man to endure, and there soon arose a scuffle, in which blows had passed between them. The captain stuck to his prey, shaking him again and again in his drunken wrath, till Harry, roused to a passion almost equal to that of his opponent, flung him at last against the corner of the club railings, and there left his foe sprawling upon the ground, having struck his head violently against the ground as he fell. Harry passed on to his own bed, indifferent, as it was afterwards said, to the fate of his antagonist. All this occupied probably five minutes in the doing, but was seen by no human eye.

As the occurrence of that night was subsequently made the ground for heavy accusation against Harry Annesley, it has been told here with sufficient minuteness to show what might be said in justification or in condemnation of his conduct—to show what might be said if the truth were spoken. For, indeed, in the discussions which arose on the subject, much was said which was not true. When he had retired from the scuffle on that night, Harry had certainly not dreamed that any serious damage had been done to the man who had certainly been altogether to blame in his provocation of the quarrel. Had he kept his temper and feelings completely under control, and knocked down Captain Scarborough only in self-defence; had he not allowed himself to be roused to wrath by treatment which could not but give rise to wrath in a young man's bosom; no doubt, when his foe lay at his feet, he would have stooped to pick him up, and have tended his wounds. But such was not Harry's character—nor that of any of the young men with whom I have been acquainted. Such, however, was the conduct apparently expected from him by many, when the circumstances of those five minutes were brought to the light. But, on the other hand, had passion not

completely got the better of him, had he not at the moment considered the attack made upon him to amount to misconduct so gross as to supersede all necessity for gentle usage on his own part, he would hardly have left the man to live or die as chance would have it. Boiling with passion, he went his way, and did leave the man on the pavement, not caring much, or rather, not thinking much, whether his victim might live or die.

On the next day Harry Annesley left London, and went down to Buston, having heard no word further about the captain. He did not start till late in the afternoon, and during the day took some trouble to make himself conspicuous about the town; but he heard nothing of Captain Scarborough. Twice he walked along Charles Street, and looked at the spot on which he had stood on the night before in what might have been deadly conflict. Then he told himself that he had not been in the least wounded, that the ferocious maddened man had attempted to do no more than shake him, that his coat had suffered and not himself, and that in return he had certainly struck the captain with all his violence. There were probably some regrets, but he said not a word on the subject to anyone, and so he left London.

For three or four days nothing was heard of the captain, nor was anything said about him. He had lodgings in town, at which he was no doubt missed, but he also had quarters at the barracks, at which he did not often sleep, but to which it was thought possible on the next morning that he might have betaken himself. Before the evening of that day had come, he had no doubt been missed, but in the world at large no special mention was made of his absence for some time. Then, among the haunts which he was known to frequent, questions began to be asked as to his whereabouts, and to be answered by doubtful assertions that nothing had been seen or heard of him for the last sixty or seventy hours.

It must be remembered that at this time Captain Scarborough was still the subject of universal remark because of the story told as to his birth. His father had declared him to be illegitimate, and had thereby robbed all his creditors. Captain Scarborough was a man quite remarkable enough to ensure universal attention for such a tale as this; but now, added to his illegitimacy was his disappearance. There was at first no idea that he had been



murdered. It became quickly known to all the world that he had, on the night in question, lost a large sum of money at a whist club which he frequented, and, in accordance with the custom of the club, had not paid the money on the spot.

The fatal Monday had come round, and the money undoubtedly was not paid. Then he was declared a defaulter, and in due process of time his name was struck off the club books with some serious increase of the ignominy hitherto sustained.

During the last fortnight or more Captain Scarborough's name had been subjected to many remarks and to much disgrace. But this non-payment of the money lost at whist was considered to be the turning-point. A man might be declared illegitimate, and might in consequence of that or any other circumstance defraud all his creditors. A man might conspire with his father with the object of doing this fraudulently, as Captain Scarborough was no doubt thought to have done by most of his acquaintances. All this he might do and not become so degraded but that his friends would talk to him and play cards with him. But to have sat down to a whist-table and not be able to pay the stakes was held to be so foul a disgrace that men did not wonder that he should have disappeared.

Such was the cause alleged for the captain's disappearance among his intimate friends; but by degrees more than his intimate friends came to talk of it. In a short time his name was in all the newspapers, and there was not a constable in London whose mind was not greatly exercised on the matter. All Scotland Yard and the police-officers were busy. Mr. Grey, in Lincoln's Inn, was much troubled on the matter. By degrees facts had made themselves clear to his mind, and he had become aware that the captain had been born before his client's marriage. He was ineffably shocked at the old squire's villainy in the matter, but declared to all to whom he spoke openly on the subject that he did not see how the sinner could be punished. He never thought that the father and son were in a conspiracy together. Nor had he believed that they had arranged the young man's disappearance in order the more thoroughly to defraud the creditors. They could not at any rate harm a man of whose whereabouts they were unaware, and who, for all they knew, might be dead. But the reader is already aware

that this surmise on the part of Mr. Grey was unfounded.

The captain had been absent for three weeks when Augustus Scarborough went down for a second time to Tretton Park in order to discuss the matter with his father.

Augustus had, with much equanimity and a steady fixed purpose, settled himself down to the position as eldest son. He pretended no anger to his father for the injury intended, and was only anxious that his own rights should be confirmed. In this he found that no great difficulty stood in his way. The creditors would contest his rights when his father should die; but for such contest he would be prepared. He had no doubt as to his own position, but thought that it would be safer and that it would also probably be cheaper to purchase the acquiescence of all claimants than to encounter the expense of a prolonged trial, to which there might be more than one appeal, and of which the end after all would be doubtful.

No very great sum of money would probably be required. No very great sum would at any rate be offered. But such an arrangement would certainly be easier if his brother were not present to be confronted with the men whom he had duped.

The squire was still ill down at Tretton, but not so ill but that he had his wits about him in all their clearness. Some said that he was not ill at all, but that in the present state of affairs the retirement suited him. But the nature of the operation which he had undergone was known to many who would not have him harassed in his present condition. In truth he had only to refuse admission to all visitors, and to take care that his commands were carried out, in order to avoid disagreeable intrusions.

"Do you mean to say that a man can do such a thing as this and that no one can touch him for it?" This was an exclamation made by Mr. Tyrerwhit to his lawyer in a tone of aggrieved disgust.

"He hasn't done anything," said the lawyer. "He only thought of doing something, and has since repented. You cannot arrest a man because he had contemplated the picking of your pocket, especially when he has shown that he is resolved not to pick it."

"As far as I can learn, nothing has been heard about him as yet," said the son to the father.

"Those limbs weren't his that were

picked out of the Thames near Blackfriars Bridge?"

"They belonged to a poor cripple who was murdered two months since."

"And that body that was found down among the Yorkshire hills?"

"He was a pedlar. There is nothing to induce a belief that Mountjoy has killed himself or been killed. In the former case his dead body would be found or his live body would be missing. For the second there is no imaginable cause for suspicion."

"Then where the devil is he?" said the anxious father.

"Ah, that's the difficulty. But I can imagine no position in which a man might be more tempted to hide himself. He is disgraced on every side and could hardly show his face in London after the money he has lost. You would not have paid his gambling debts?"

"Certainly not," said the father. "There must be an end to all things."

"Nor could I. Within the last month past he has drawn from me every shilling that I have had at my immediate command."

"Why did you give 'em to him?"

"It would be difficult to explain all the reasons. He was then my elder brother, and it suited me to have him somewhat under my hand. At any rate I did do so, and am unable for the present to do more. Looking round about, I do not see where it was possible for him to raise a sovereign as soon as it was once known that he was nobody."

"What will become of him?" said the father. "I don't like the idea of his being starved. He can't live without something to live upon."

"God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," said the son. "For lambs such as he there always seems to be pasture provided of one sort or another."

"You would not like to have to trust to such pastures," said the father.

"Nor should I like to be hanged; but I should have to be hanged if I had committed murder. Think of the chances which he has had, and the way in which he has misused them. Although illegitimate he was to have had the whole property, of which not a shilling belongs to him; and he has not lost it because it was not his own, but has simply gambled it away among the Jews. What can happen to a man in such a condition better than to turn up as a hunter among the Rocky

Mountains, or as a gold-digger in Australia? In this last adventure he seems to have plunged horribly, and to have lost over three thousand pounds. You wouldn't have paid that for him?"

"Not again—certainly not again."

"Then what could he do better than disappear? I suppose I shall have to make him an allowance some of these days, and if he can live and keep himself dark I will do so."

There was in this a tacit allusion to his father's speedy death which was grim enough; but the father passed it by without any expression of displeasure. He certainly owed much to his younger son, and was willing to pay it by quiescence. Let them both forbear. Such was the language which he held to himself in thinking of his younger son. Augustus was certainly behaving well to him. Not a word of rebuke had passed his lips as to the infamous attempt at spoliation which had been made. The old squire felt grateful for his younger son's conduct, but yet in his heart of hearts he preferred the elder.

"He has denuded me of every penny," said Augustus, "and I must ask you to refund me something of what has gone."

"He has kept me very bare. A man with so great a propensity for getting rid of money, I think no father ever before had to endure."

"You have had the last of it."

"I do not know that. If I live, and he lets me know his whereabouts, I cannot leave him penniless. I do feel that a great injustice has been done him."

"I don't exactly see it," said Augustus.

"Because you're too hard-hearted to put yourself in another man's place. He was my eldest son."

"He thought that he was."

"And should have remained so had there been a hope for him," said the squire, roused to temporary anger. Augustus only shrugged his shoulders. "But there is no good talking about it."

"Not the least in the world. Mr. Grey I suppose knows the truth at last. I shall have to get three or four thousand pounds from you, or I too must resort to the Jews. I shall do it at any rate under better circumstances than my brother."

Some arrangement was at last made which was satisfactory to the son, and which we must presume that the father found to be endurable. Then the son took his leave, and went back to London

with the understood intention of pushing the enquiries as to his brother's existence and whereabouts.

The sudden and complete disappearance of Captain Scarborough struck Mrs. Mountjoy with the deepest awe. It was not at first borne in upon her to believe that Captain Mountjoy Scarborough, an officer in the Coldstreams, and the acknowledged heir to the Tretton property, had vanished away as a stray street-sweeper might do, or some milliner's lowest workwoman. But at last there were advertisements in all the newspapers and placards on all the walls, and Mrs. Mountjoy did understand that the captain was gone. She could as yet hardly believe that he was no longer heir to Tretton; and in such short discussions with Florence as were necessary on the subject, she preferred to express no opinion whatever as to his conduct. But she would by no means give way when urged to acknowledge that no marriage between Florence and the captain was any longer to be regarded as possible. While the captain was away the matter should be left as if in abeyance; but this by no means suited the young lady's views. Mrs. Mountjoy was not a reticent woman, and had no doubt been too free in whispering among her friends something of her daughter's position. This Florence had resented; but it had still been done, and in Cheltenham generally she was regarded as an engaged young lady. It had been in vain that she had denied that it was so. Her mother's word on such a subject was supposed to be more credible than her own; and now this man with whom she was believed to be so closely connected, had disappeared from the world among the most disreputable circumstances. But when she explained the difficulty to her mother, her mother bade her hold her tongue for the present, and seemed to hold out a hope that the captain might at last be restored to his old position.

"Let them restore him ever so much, he would never be anything to me, mamma." Then Mrs. Mountjoy would only shake her head and purse her lips.

On the evening of the day after the fracas in the street, Harry Annesley went down to Buston, and there remained for the next two or three days, holding his tongue absolutely as to the adventure of that night. There was no one at Buston to whom he would probably have made known the circumstances. But there was clinging to it a

certain flavour of disreputable conduct on his own part which sealed his lips altogether. The louder and more frequent the tidings which reached his ears as to the captain's departure, the more strongly did he feel that duty required him to tell what he knew upon the matter. Many thoughts and many fears encompassed him. At first was the idea that he had killed the man by the violence of his blow, or that his death had been caused by his fall. Then it occurred to him that it was impossible that Scarborough should have been killed, and that no account should be given as to the finding of the body. At last he persuaded himself that he could not have killed the man, but he was assured at the same time that the disappearance must in some sort have been occasioned by what then took place. And it could not but be that the captain, if alive, should be aware of the nature of the struggle which had taken place. He heard chiefly from the newspapers the full record of the captain's illegitimacy; he heard of his condition with the creditors; he heard of those gambling debts which were left unpaid at the club. He saw it also stated and repeated that these were the grounds for the man's disappearance. It was quite credible that the man should disappear, or endeavour to disappear, under such a cloud of difficulties. It did not require that he and his violence should be adduced as an extra cause. Indeed, had the man been minded to vanish before the encounter, he might in all human probability have been deterred by the circumstances of the quarrel. It gave no extra reason for his disappearance, and could in no wise be counted with it were he to tell the whole story in Scotland Yard. He had been grossly misused on the occasion, and had escaped from such mis-usage by the only means in his power. But still he felt that had he told the story, people far and wide would have connected his name with the man's absence, and, worse again, that Florence's name would have become entangled with it also. For the first day or two he had from hour to hour abstained from telling all that he knew, and then, when the day or two were passed, and when a week had run by—when a fortnight had been allowed to go—it was impossible for him not to hold his tongue.

He became nervous, unhappy, and irritated down at Buston, with his father and mother, and sisters, but more especially with his uncle. Previous to this his



uncle for a couple of months had declined to see him; now he was sent for to the Hall, and interrogated daily on this special subject. Mr. Prosper was aware that his nephew had been intimate with Augustus Scarborough, and that he might therefore be presumed to know much about the family. Mr. Prosper took the keenest interest in the illegitimacy and the impecuniosity and final disappearance of the captain, and no doubt did, in his cross-examinations, discover the fact that Harry was unwilling to answer his questions. He found out for the first time that Harry was acquainted with the captain, and also contrived to extract from him the name of Miss Mountjoy. But he could learn nothing else, beyond Harry's absolute unwillingness to talk upon the subject, which was in itself much. It must be understood that Harry was not specially reverential in these communications. Indeed, he gave his uncle to understand that he regarded his questions as impertinent, and at last declared his intention of not coming to the Hall any more for the present. Then Mr. Prosper whispered to his sister that he was quite sure that Harry Annesley knew more than he chose to say as to Captain Scarborough's whereabouts.

"My dear Peter," said Mrs. Annesley, "I really think that you are doing poor Harry an injustice."

Mrs. Annesley was always on the guard to maintain something like an affectionate intercourse between her own family and the squire.

"My dear Anne, you do not see into a millstone as far as I do. You never did."

"But, Peter, you really shouldn't say such things of Harry. When all the police-officers are looking about themselves to catch up anything in their way, they would catch him up at a moment's notice if they heard that a magistrate of the county had expressed such an opinion."

"Why don't he tell me?" said Mr. Prosper.

"There's nothing to tell."

"Ah, that's your opinion; because you can't see into a millstone. I tell you that Harry knows more about this Captain Scarborough than anyone else. They were very intimate together."

"Harry only just knew him."

"Well, you'll see. I tell you that Harry's name will become mixed up with Captain Scarborough's, and I hope that it will be in no discreditable manner. I hope so, that's all." Harry in the mean-

time had returned to London in order to escape his uncle, and to be on the spot to learn anything that might come in his way as to the now acknowledged mystery respecting the captain.

Such was the state of things at the commencement of the period to which my story refers.

## THE LOST ATLANTIS.

MOST persons are acquainted with the old, immemorial legend, coming down to us from the remotest ages of the world, of the existence of a vast island-continent in the western seas, in which flourished the first civilisation of mankind, and which by volcanic action, some stupendous cataclysm, or both together, was submerged and lost, leaving little more than the bare remembrance of its fate and a name to the whelming ocean in the sunless abysses of which its stately cities lie for ever buried. Such is the story; one which has not unnaturally possessed a strong attraction to the mind of man for at least four centuries. Many speculations have been launched with regard to its truth or falsity, some writers displaying great ingenuity in demonstrating its absolute verity; others laughing it to scorn as the idle dream and poetical fantasy of an immortal Greek philosopher, who has thereby achieved one of the grandest triumphs of genius in permanently puzzling posterity. Most persons relegate it to the region of the unascertainable, concluding with the latest writer who has undertaken to epitomise the subject, in the new *Encyclopædia Britannica*, that "the story may embody some popular legend, and the legend may have rested on certain historical circumstances; but what these were it is—as the numerous theories advanced on the subject may be held as proving—impossible to determine."

So far from giving it up, however, in this fashion are the inquisitive minority, that recently the question has been broached again and with unusual earnestness. Scientific reasons are advanced for believing in this ancient marvel and mystery of the ocean. These and other corroborative probabilities can only be fittingly introduced by some account of what was told and fancied about the lost Atlantis.

Plato is the first known authority for it, of course. In the dialogue called the *Timæus*, Critias relates to Socrates how his grandfather, also named Critias, had

been told by Solon, the wisest of the seven sages of Greece, an old-world story which he had learned from the Egyptian priests of Sais, at the head of the Delta of the Nile, whose records went further back by nine thousand years than the native accounts. According to these venerable chronicles, the Greek civilisation of Solon's time was a thing of yesterday, and in no wise comparable to that which had flourished in Attica before the greatest of the many deluges of which the priests had knowledge. There then dwelt in it the fairest and noblest race of men that ever lived, first in war and pre-eminent for the excellence of their laws, of which people the latter Athenians were but a remnant. Their ancestors perished by a tremendous catastrophe, and the ignorant survivors of it died also and made no sign. What follows will be best given in extenso, from Professor Jowett's translation of Plato. An aged priest of Sais, be it observed, is the interlocutor :

"Many great and wonderful deeds are recorded of your State in our histories. But one of them exceeds all the rest in greatness and valour. For these historians tell of a mighty power which was aggressing wantonly against the whole of Europe and Asia, and to which your city put an end. This power came forth out of the Atlantic Ocean, for in those days the Atlantic was navigable, and there was an island situated in front of the straits which you call the columns of Heracles ; the island was larger than Libya and Asia put together, and was the way to other islands, and from the islands you might pass to the whole of the opposite continent which surrounded the true ocean ; for this sea which is within the Straits of Heracles is only a harbour, having a narrow entrance, but the other is a real sea, and the surrounding land may most truly be called a continent. Now in this island of Atlantis there was a great and wonderful empire which had rule over the whole island and several others, as well as over parts of the continent, and besides these they subjugated the parts of Libya within the columns of Heracles as far as Egypt, and of Europe as far as Tyrrhenia (Tuscany). The vast power thus gathered into one, endeavoured to subdue at one blow our country and yours and the whole of the land which was within the straits ; and then, Solon, your country shone forth, in the excellence of her virtue and strength, among all mankind ; for she was first in courage and military skill, and was the

leader of the Hellenes. And when the rest fell off from her, being compelled to stand alone, after having undergone the very extremity of danger, she defeated and triumphed over the invaders, and preserved from slavery those who were not yet subjected, and freely liberated all the others who dwelt within the limits of Heracles. But afterwards there occurred violent earthquakes and floods ; and in a single day and night of rain all your warlike men in a body sank into the earth, and the island of Atlantis in like manner disappeared and sank beneath the sea. And that is the reason why the sea in those parts is impassable and impenetrable, because there is such a quantity of shallow mud in the way, and this was caused by the subsidence of the island."

Solon, we are informed, was so much impressed by this story that he designed making it the subject of an epic poem, which he began, but never found leisure to complete, in consequence of the factions and troubles with which he had to contend on his return to Attica. This project is also mentioned in his life of the sage by Plutarch, who probably obtained the information from Plato. He, adds, however, that the destruction of Atlantis was caused by the Ogygian flood, which is said to have preceded that of Deucalion—our biblical deluge.

The whole story, be it remarked, is told by Plato seemingly in good faith, as an authentic tradition, preserved by an aged friend of one to whom the philosopher himself was believed to be remotely related. There is no suggestion of allegory, and the recipients accept the narrative as plain matter of fact, retailed on unquestionable authority. Critias, the younger, says that being accidentally reminded of the story by the talk of Socrates, he was able to recall every word of what he had heard many times, when only ten years old.

There are other allusions to Atlantis in ancient classic writers, but probably, as in the case of Plutarch, derived from the Timæus. Seneca's famous lines in his *Medea*, though containing a most remarkable prediction, can hardly be said to have any bearing on the subject ; for they assert not the past existence of a lost continent at the gate of the old world, but that of an unknown new one, across the waters, to be revealed in coming ages.

In the words of the historian Prescott, "It was the lucky hit of the philosopher rather than the poet." But making a leap



from Roman to mediæval times, we shall in the latter find some curious confirmations of the ancient legend.

The Portuguese have a tradition that there is an island, known as that of St. Brandan, occasionally seen off the west coast of Northern Africa. Washington Irving's account of it, prefixed to his story of the *Adalantado* of the Seven Cities (another version of Rip Van Winkle), is so much to our purpose that it would be sheer affectation to re-cast it. "Those," he writes, "who have read the history of the Canaries, —the Fortunate Islands of the ancients— may remember the wonders told of this enigmatical island. Occasionally it would be visible from their shores, stretching away in the clear bright west, to all appearance substantial like themselves and still more beautiful. Expeditions would launch forth from the Canaries to explore this land of promise. For a time its sun-gilt peaks and long shadowy promontories would remain distinctly visible, but in proportion as the voyagers approached, peak and promontory would gradually fade away, until nothing would remain but blue sky above and deep blue water below. Hence this mysterious isle was stigmatised by ancient cosmographers with the name of *Aprasitus*, or the *Inaccessible*. The failure of numerous expeditions sent in quest of it, both in ancient and modern days, have at length caused its very existence to be called in question, and it has been pronounced a mere optical illusion, like the *Fata Morgana* of the Straits of Messina, or has been classed with those unsubstantial regions known to mariners as *Cape Flyaway*, and the coast of *Cloudland*." For other particulars about the Island of St. Brandan and that of the Seven Cities, the curious reader is referred to articles under those heads in the appendix to Irving's *Life of Columbus*. It is conjectured that these stories may have had some influence upon the mind of that immortal discoverer.

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have been subject to earthquakes and eruptions of the most terrific character. Islets have appeared and disappeared; flourishing towns have sunk engulfed in the earth; dreadful volcanoes have burst out in the midst of fertile pastures and devastated whole tracts of country. Submarine eruptions have been by no means uncommon. In that of 1811-2 an island was thrown up, about a mile in circumference and three hundred feet high, which subsequently sank gradually into the sea, no trace of it remaining, and next year eighty fathoms of water rolled over the site of the vanished "*Sabrina*."

We have only to fancy similar agencies of transcendent force—and Nature is quite capable of them—at work in the same ocean to wreck a continent. What wonder then, that when the Azores were discovered, with these startling accompaniments—all the under-world of waters being apparently stirred to its profoundest abysses—men remembered and believed Plato's story? In that amazing century their minds were continually exercised by great events, and always ready for the marvellous. Thus the old Portuguese chronicler, *Damiao de Goes*, gravely tells that on *Carvo*—one of the islets of the most westerly group—there was found a wonderful equestrian statue carved in stone, the human figure strangely dressed, with one hand on the mane of the horse, the right arm extended, and the forefinger pointing to the west! Such an effigy on an uninhabited island in 1455, could not fail to be associated with the discovery of America by Columbus in 1492. *Goes* says that the king, *Dom Manoel*, sent a draughtsman to make a sketch of the group, and subsequently an engineer, with appliances for removing the entire statue to Portugal. Unfortunately it only arrived in a broken and fragmentary condition. There were also inscriptions which no man could decipher cut into the rock upon which this statue had stood. Our chronicler conjectures these to have been the work of Norsemen.

But we must return to our legends more directly confirmatory of the lost Atlantis. The *Basques*, pronounced by *Humboldt* the survivors of the primitive *Iberi*, who once occupied Spain, and whose language, according to the native grammarians, existed before the building of the Tower of Babel and was brought to the peninsula by *Tubal*—this remarkable people tell a story which seems strangely compounded of sacred and profane tradition. They say there was a vast

country in the western ocean inhabited by monstrous giants, who invaded Europe for cannibalistic purposes, and even warred against the Almighty and his angels, when they were all destroyed by lightning, thunder, and a tremendous deluge, which sank their land for ever in the depths of the sea. Here we have the Atlantis, Genesis, Homer, and Hesiod in curious combination.

The Welsh, too, have a tradition akin to that of the Island of St. Brandan, and according to the Rev. E. Davies, the historian of Druidism, its rites mainly commemorated a great flood, which he identifies with some primeval inundation from the Euxine Sea. Indeed the melancholy western main, with its archipelago of visionary islands, contained for the early Celtic bards most of the half-guessed secrets of life. Tennyson's *Voyage of Maeldune* is a magnificent allegorical expansion of this idea; and the Laureate has also finely commemorated the old belief in the country of Lyonesse, extending beyond the bounds of Cornwall:

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Furthermore the Aztecs celebrated the festival of the winter solstice, like the Egyptians, revered the cross and eucharist, and had ceremonies resembling circumcision and baptism. Their zodiacal signs were almost identical with those of the Eastern Asiatics, of whom they also remind us in connection with the institutions of caste and cremation. They had a religious festival analogous to the sabbatic year of the Jews, when all furniture was destroyed and all fires extinguished; new fires being obtained by the priests after the manner of our Druids. Like the Egyptians, neither the Aztecs nor Peruvians had discovered iron, but found a substitute for it in such a combination of metals as gave to their tools almost the temper of steel. And all three nations transported immense masses of stone by means of long files of men, who dragged them with ropes over huge wooden rollers, as represented in numerous sculptures on Egyptian buildings, and in Mr. Poynter's well-known picture. The American pyramids, too, rivalled and, at least in one instance—that of Cholula—surpassed those on the banks of the Nile or Euphrates. These, however, were not the work of the Aztecs, but in all probability constructed by their more polished predecessors, the Toltecs, from whom indeed they seem to have derived much more—namely their astronomy, chronology, and sacerdotal institutions.

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tiquity. Their ideas of a future life were analogous to those of the Egyptians. Like that people they embalmed, though in a different manner, and buried mummies in artificial caverns, often with their treasures. They worshipped the sun, moon, and stars, and a host of inferior deities, as did the Chaldeans. After their greatest festival, that of the summer solstice, they, alone of all the nations of the American continent, practised the rite of divination by inspecting the entrails of animals, like the pagan augurs of the Old World. They kindled the sacred fire by means of metal reflectors, as mentioned of the Romans by Plutarch in his *Life of Numa*. They had confession, penance, convents and nuns, or "virgins of the sun," who were subject to precisely the same punishment as the classic vestals, if detected in unchastity.

Lastly, the word "mama" is Peruvian for mother, while "papa," with the ancient Mexicans denoted a priest of high rank, reminding us of the pope of the Italians.

These analogies should imply something. But there are others which are still more suggestive. In the dense forests of Chiapa and Yucatan we find ruins of ancient cities—Mitla, Palenque, and Itzalana or Uxmal—which argue a higher civilisation than anything discovered elsewhere on the American continent. The work either of the Toltecs, or some still more ancient cognate race, these cyclopean remains were dilapidated and desolate at the date of the Mexican Conquest. They are so old and time-worn and shattered in appearance that, compared to them, the Egyptian pyramids and temples seem things of yesterday. Incalculable layers of soil have filled their vast court-yards and roofless halls, and overlaid their broken terraces and the titanic flights of steps leading thereto. Immense trees of many centuries girth grow out of the enormous chinks and crevices of a wilderness of ruins. Everywhere the profuse vegetation of a tropical climate has invaded and overrun these mysterious temples, palaces, and cities; while around stretches the unbroken forest. And in architecture, mode of construction, sculpture, and decoration, all these buildings present a remarkable affinity to those of Egypt. Only the ornamentation is emphatically grimmer—with a ghastly fondness for rudimentary death's heads and cross-bones, suggestive, perhaps, of a remoter and more savage antiquity.

That such is the case we have recent remarkable testimony. An enthusiastic and enterprising archaeologist, Dr. Le Plongeon

of Mexico, who has for some time been engaged in exploring the buried cities of Yucatan, writes as follows: "I have discovered among the ruins of Mayapan, the gnomon used by the astronomers of that city; also a complete masonic temple, with symbols and hieroglyphics. I have found that the ancient Maya alphabet contains letters and characters belonging to the Egyptian, Etruscan, and Chaldean alphabets; also that the Maya language is akin to all the ancient languages spoken by men in ages long gone by. My studies have caused me to believe that the founders of the first Chaldean monarchy were Maya, and probably the people who colonised Egypt and brought civilisation to that country. You must remember that the Egyptian priests always pointed to the west"—like Goes' mysterious statue—"when asked concerning the birthplace of their ancestry. In the work which I am about to write concerning Yucatan, I hope to be able to give, in the shape of coincidences, so many facts as to leave no doubt in the minds of intelligent people that the cradle of the civilisation of the world was the American continent." Perhaps it reached the eastern hemisphere by way of the lost Atlantis.

Having thus laid both worlds under contribution for evidence of such a country, we shall make a very brief inquisition into the depths of the ocean. As most persons are aware, its whole floor is now mapped out for us; it has been surveyed and a report published. The Atlantic, we are told, if drained, would be a vast plain, with a mountain range running parallel to the American coast; while another crosses it from Ireland to Newfoundland. The ocean is thus divided into three great basins, no longer unfathomable, but full fifteen miles deep; while the tops of these submarine mountains rise to within two miles of the surface. The higher points of the first-mentioned ridge form the islands of the Azores. For thousands of miles these mountains are whitened by tiny creamy shells. The depths loom redly beneath the black motionless water and appear heaped with formless volcanic masses. East of the American continent stretches a great sunken plateau, extending from Mexico to beyond the West Indies. Before its submersion the Caribbean Sea must have been connected with the Atlantic only by some narrow passages; and, at an earlier time, it was a gulf of the Pacific or joined it through wide estuaries. Then Central



America and northern South America must have been a series of large islands—perhaps those alluded to by Plato as beyond his drowned continent.

At an American Congress, held at Madrid on September 26th, 1881, when sundry historical and archæological problems were discussed, Senor Botella, a distinguished geologist, produced a map of the lost Atlantis. He figured it as a great horse-shoe, the extremities of which almost touched both continents. The British Isles, as well as Iceland and Greenland, were not depicted as fragments, the artist insisting that they only became such after the cataclysm, in which he fully believed. He adduced reasons drawn from principles and facts of geology and of natural history. We are discovering new forces every day. What if some enterprising Briton, or keen Yankee, should yet dredge from out of its unfathomed slime the lost Atlantis?

#### A SPECULATIVE SPIRIT.

Now, to understand the solemnity of this story you must believe that Hopkins was a man entirely without imagination—Frank Blair and I decided that when we first made his acquaintance, years ago; and have never changed our opinion. We were then two young geniuses who hoped to soar to fame on the wings of art, the most imaginative art of all, figure painting; and we knew and were glad to hail imagination wherever we saw it. Besides, as Blair truly remarked, Hopkins was a man whose vocation it was to make money, somehow, on the Stock Exchange; so one might as well look for imagination in a model engaged at a shilling an hour. Then again, the man's face was sufficient to assure you that he was not blessed with any such quality. It is a large face, rather flabby and sprinkled with freckles; the nose is short and thick, and lip, chin, and cheeks, quite destitute of hair. Hopkins's body, too, is almost inclined to corpulence; he dresses in a commonplace manner, his fingers are short and thick; so I think we may safely settle, to start with, that Hopkins is a very ordinary man, and has no imagination.

I scarcely remember how we first foregathered with Hopkins. He was hardly the man we should have chosen for an intimate friend; yet, at one time, we saw a good deal of him. In those jolly old days Frank and I lodged in modest rooms together and shared a studio. I think

Mr. Levi Solomon, the picture-dealer, to whom when hardly pressed we would sell a picture or two, brought him to us as a gentleman who desired a personal interview. It was, of course, against Solomon's secret wishes that the introduction took place, as the worthy Israelite did not approve of direct transactions between artist and collector; but Hopkins was doubtless a good customer and stood firm, so one day Solomon conducted him to our studio. We must have been in funds at that moment, for I remember we treated poor Solomon rather cavalierly; and as for Hopkins, we looked upon him as a being from a lower sphere; a Philistine; a creature whose presence in the world could only be tolerated from the stern necessity that an artist must sell his pictures to someone, in order to live. Our ideas of the grandeur and importance of the true mission of art were very lofty in those days, especially if we happened to have a few pounds in our pockets. Hopkins to us was one of a class of men who buy young artists' pictures, solely with a view of realising hundreds per cent. on the investments when fame comes to the painter.

However, whether from mercenary inclinations, or for the many good qualities that adorned us, Hopkins took a great fancy to us and sought our society from that day. Of course he had the usual commercial faults, and not a few defects of education; but he had a great and proper reverence for genius, and delighted to do it homage—at least so we understood the meaning of those little dinners he gave us, at his own chambers and various other places. As artists, after all, are but mortal, and, when young and struggling, not too highly fed, we accepted Hopkins's attentions in the spirit we fancied they were meant, and, after a bit, tolerated him; indeed, even began to think he was a desirable acquaintance—so moved by a feeling of gratitude for his civilities, only doubled the market-price of the pictures we could at times induce him to buy.

We enjoyed the dinners he gave us very much, but I am sure Hopkins enjoyed himself more when we were kind enough to condescend to invite him to spend an evening at our lodgings. He gave us Lafite and choice cigars; we only placed pipes and whisky upon the table; but then, as he said, our rooms, if humble, were the abode of art, which he honoured. Altogether Hopkins was not a bad sort, and those were merry old times.

If Hopkins did not himself take a leading

part in the conversation during these evening entertainments, he was, at least, a capital listener; and, somehow, when Frank Blair and I, as was our wont, got into lively discussions on things in general and art in particular, we had contracted the habit of addressing our remarks to our guest, much in the same way that honourable members address their words to the Speaker. Hopkins would sit in the crazy armchair and listen with a sort of stolid impartiality, but rarely ventured to make a remark on his own account. Occasionally I fancied his face during our talk would wear an expression of content, but should not like to be rash enough to assert even that much. He would sit smoking his pipe or cigar, but the nearest approach he made to entering into the discussion was by giving an occasional grunt, which might be either of approbation or condemnation, as those who heard chose to construe it. Sometimes, for want of better amusement, Frank and I would join our forces together and chaff our friend unmercifully. He bore our sallies of wit very well, and seemed to like us none the worse that we made fun at his expense. Yet there was little fun in it, after all; and we decided that, except to keep our hands in, it was scarcely worth while to waste our fine passes on a man who was so unresisting and knew so little of fence. But one unlucky evening he brought upon himself a regular onslaught.

We had been dilating upon the charms of an artist's life, and asserting its moral superiority to that of any trade, when our friend sighed deeply and said:

"Sometimes, do you know, I think had I learnt to draw when a boy, I might have done something in your line. But now I am afraid it is too late."

This idea was so presumptuous that we felt it demanded instant and severe punishment, so Frank said gently:

"My dear fellow, you draw some things very nicely now, even without an artist's education—cheques for instance."

I followed more severely:

"Mr. Hopkins, allow me to warn you against falling into the error of that general public which you so well represent, in thinking that the execution alone makes the artist. An artist, as I understand the word, must have many qualities besides manual dexterity. He must have, in addition, many of the gifts of the poet, and amongst them that greatest gift of all, imagination. Now you, my dear sir, I am afraid are not very great at that."

Poor Hopkins said nothing, evidently convinced by Frank's sarcasm and my ponderous arguments that his case was a hopeless one.

"Do you ever dream?" asked Frank.

"Not very often," replied Hopkins, "only after curried lobster or crab, or something of that sort. I am a very sound sleeper."

"Then you see, if you can't dream without the assistance of indigestible food, you can't imagine, and I, with every wish to encourage incipient talent, should advise you not to adopt the profession of an artist."

"Well, well," said Hopkins, "let us say no more about it," and he sighed again.

But we were not inclined to let him off so easily, and went on in the same vein till we were weary, and tossed him and his aspirations about between us like a ball. We treated him very badly, and he must have been the best tempered or the thickest skinned of men to have stood it without showing anger.

Tired at last of baiting our imperturbable friend we turned to other topics.

"Seen Jones's new picture?" asked Frank.

"Yes. Don't care much for it," I replied; "men shouldn't try to paint old subjects unless they can treat them in a new manner."

"Well, it must be hard to strike out a new line with Hamlet and the ghost. I never tried to paint a ghost, so I don't know what I should make of it."

"I shall wait till I see one, and then offer it handsome terms for a few sittings. I think there is something to be done with ghosts, but they must be of an original kind, not conventional, like Jones's."

"Hang it, no. They are always the same; thinly painted, with something placed conveniently behind them to show their transparency. I wouldn't care to paint a ghost of that sort, people only laugh at them; but I should like to put that creepy sensation on canvas—that feeling that something uncanny is about."

"Well, when someone does see a ghost we may get the correct thing; not till then."

"Ghosts ain't visible," said Hopkins solemnly; "but, for all that, there are ghosts."

A remark like this from Hopkins was an event not lightly to be passed by, so we cried in a breath:

"What do you know about ghosts? Ever troubled with them?"

He took his pipe from his lips and said quietly:

"If you young fellows won't laugh too much, I don't mind telling you."

We promised the gravity of Solon, and Frank winked at me in so barefaced a manner, that anybody but our unobservant friend would have seen it and at once declined speaking. However, no mischief was done, for in deep accents he began:

"You remember——"

"Stop a bit," I said; "I can tell from the way the story opens it is going to be something awful. Let us fill the glasses first." We did so. "Now fire away, old fellow, and don't, please, embellish your truthful tale with too many flowers of fancy."

Hopkins paused a little.

"Look here," he said, "you won't mention this to anybody, as I should not like the people on the Stock Exchange to hear of it. They chaff so."

We vowed that wild horses should not rend the terrible revelation from our bosoms.

Hopkins began again:

"You remember my late partner, poor old Bobbett?"

"Never even heard of him," interrupted Blair.

"Ah, to be sure. Before your time. Well, our firm was—indeed, is now—Bobbett, Hopkins, and Company."

"What business?" I asked with the air of a cross-examining counsel.

"Stock-jobbers. Office, Capel Court," said Hopkins with a return to his usual brevity.

"Excuse my interrupting your interesting tale," said Frank, "but what is a stock-jobber? Something eminently respectable, honest, and lucrative, I have no doubt. But what is it?"

Hopkins summed up his profession briefly thus:

"You want to sell stock—another man wants to buy stock—you go to a broker—he goes to a broker—both brokers go to a jobber, or dealer, which sounds nicer—your broker sells him the stock, his broker buys it of him. That's a stock-jobber's business in a nutshell."

"But as I am ignorant of all transactions in stock, I fail to see the pull of it."

"Well, your broker sells it to me for, say, one hundred and twenty; the other man's broker buys it of me for, say, one hundred and twenty-one; and that's the way we make our living."

"That is a nice business," said Blair, in tones of admiration; "so easy, just the thing to suit you, I should think."

"Don't listen to him," I cried; "go on with your tale."

Hopkins, not the least discomposed by the interruptions, proceeded:

"Old Bobbett was my partner, and a capital partner he was—sharp as a needle, and bold as a lion, and always fair in his dealings between partner and partner. The only fault I had to find with him was that he was a little too fond of speculating on his own account. I like best to let people speculate through me. It pays best in the long run, and you sleep much sounder when a rising or falling market don't make a difference of a thousand or so to you. But Bobbett couldn't keep out of it. The excitement was everything to him, and I must say he was very clever; seldom making a bad mistake. He gave all his time to it and had the most marvellous way of picking up information before other people. I never knew where he got his tips, but when he strolled into the office of a morning and said, 'Better sell or buy North British, Brighton As, or what else it might be, I knew he had heard something, and there would be a move one way or another in the stocks he named. I tell you I used to get very frightened at first, especially when we did make losses; but at each year's end I found the balance the right side, so, at last, I came to trust Bobbett implicitly—let him do just as he liked; and if he had told me Consols were going to drop to eighty I think I should have believed him. Poor old Bobbett!"

Hopkins paused here; it might have been from the emotion caused by the recollection of tender commercial passages between himself and the lamented Bobbett; but if so, his face said nothing.

Frank drew the back of his hand across his eyes and murmured:

"This is all very interesting—very pathetic, but where's the promised ghost?"

Our stolid friend took no notice, but went on like one commencing a fresh chapter of a novel.

"One day my partner told me he was going to the north of England on some private business. There was very little doing on the Exchange at that time, or, I am sure, no private business would have called him away. 'Better not operate until my return,' he said, 'unless you hear from me. If I think anything worth doing, or pick up any news, I will wire.' 'All right,' I said; 'pleasant journey to you.' And so he went out of the office, never to return. Poor old Bobbett!"



Hopkins seemed almost in tears, and we, who had never given him credit for such tender feelings, tempered our surprise with sympathy.

"The next day but one came a telegram—from John Bobbett, Crossleigh Road Station. It contained these simple words, 'Sell thirty thousand Marthas.' I was thunderstruck as I read it."

"Wait a minute," said Blair; "you are going beyond us again. What did he mean? Were you slave-jobbers as well as stock-jobbers?"

"We call stocks by nicknames. Caledonian Deferred are 'Claras,' Brighton Deferred are 'Berthas,' Northern As 'Noras,' so that Manchester and Dundees are 'Marthas.'"

"I see," said Blair; "what ingenuity!"

"I was thunderstruck, I say; and as I read the telegram my first thought was, it must be a forgery; but a secret word, known to us alone, put its authenticity beyond a doubt. And yet, in spite of my high opinion of Bobbett's cleverness, I hesitated for some minutes. I could see no possible reason to expect a fall in the stock named. The traffic return was good, and a large dividend was naturally expected. All rails were high, and all the knowing people said must go higher. There was lots of public money for investment, and the outside public dearly loves to buy on a rising market, and yet, with all these facts before me, I am proud to say I trusted my old partner, although it was with a heavy heart I followed his instructions. I sold at the best price I could get, and just as I had placed the last five thousand, became aware of great excitement in the market. You will scarcely credit it, but telegrams came in, running so: 'Terrible accident on Manchester and Dundee line. Two trains completely wrecked. Fifty persons killed and wounded.' You must remember the collision. It was an awful smash up, and nearly swamped the dividend on the deferred shares for that half-year.

"As soon as the first excitement subsided I began to think of Bobbett. I knew he was somewhere up that way, and for the moment felt anxious about him, and then I laughed at my fears as I remembered the telegram I had received a short time before. He, at least, must be all right, or he could not have sent me that line; but what an artful old rascal—fellow, I mean—to manage to forestall everyone in the intelligence! He must have sped to the

nearest station, despatched his message, and perhaps bribed the telegraphist to keep back the official news until I had time to complete the transaction. However he had managed, it was very clever, and ought to be a lot of money in our pockets, and thankful I was I had trusted him.

"I dare say you two in your hearts think this very wrong, but it is diamond cut diamond on the London Stock Exchange, I can tell you."

Frank and I made polite disclaimers, and as we were growing rather interested in this iniquitous exploit of Bobbett's, pressed Hopkins to go on without fear of wounding our susceptibilities.

"Of course I was very sorry for the poor people killed, but I could not help feeling as I went back to my office that I had done a very good day's work. 'I won't close,' I said, 'until Bobbett returns. I should think, with this transaction open, he is sure to get back to-morrow.' Even as I made this resolution, a clerk put a telegram in my hand. It came from some railway official, and informed me that John Bobbett had been killed in the smash. My surprise at the first message was nothing to what I felt now. It was utterly incomprehensible—it was impossible. How could Bobbett be dead when his telegram lay before me? When he sent that he must have been alive, and what was more, had all his wits about him. It was barely possible he could have got any one else to send off the message, and died afterwards from injuries. I was greatly puzzled and alarmed, so decided that the best thing I could do to elucidate the mystery was to go myself to the scene of the accident, and ascertain the truth. I started by the night mail, travelled all night, and early in the morning reached Crossleigh Road, a little station of no importance. The accident had happened some miles further down the line, and when I reached the place, I was conducted to a large barn which stood near the side of the railway; and there, laid out on the deal boards, I saw, side by side with many a ghastly object, the corpse of poor old Bobbett, mangled and battered almost beyond recognition! After the emotion I felt at seeing my old partner in this state had subsided, a feeling of intense fear replaced it. I saw at one glance that by no possibility could he have moved a foot after the accident, and as I stood wondering, a doctor who was near me said:



"He was more fortunate than many, his death was instantaneous."

"I obtained further particulars from the people about, and learnt that his body had been extricated from the wreck of the carriages, where it lay with about a ton of wood and iron on top of it."

"And yet I had his telegram, sent from Crossleigh Road, a station, as I told you before, at least five miles from the scene of the collision, and I received that telegram nearly an hour before any news came of the accident."

Hopkins knocked the ashes out of his pipe, and was silent. The man's tale had been told so simply, so circumstantially, the time and places stated so distinctly, and apparently truthfully, that Frank and I for the moment were unable to suggest any explanation. Hopkins replenished his pipe with the air of one who has nothing further to say. At last I asked:

"But did you not enquire at the telegraph office?"

"Oh yes. But I hardly like to tell you the result of my enquiries, it seems so strange. I interviewed the man who worked the machine. I did not want to get a marvellous tale spread about, so was very cautious in my questions, enquiring what messages he had sent off the day before. At first I could get nothing out of him, but I noticed, when I asked him whether he could remember any strange occurrence just before the accident, he seemed troubled, and hesitated a little; so I pressed him further, and at last got this statement from him. Some time, about an hour he thinks, before he heard of the accident down the line, he was standing in the office with his back to the fire, engaged in cracking nuts, eating apples, or some other device that clerks with plenty of leisure employ to while away the time, when he felt a breath of cold air as if some one had entered and left the outer door ajar. He turned round to remonstrate with the careless intruder, and, to his surprise, saw the door was shut. As he glanced round the room he heard the familiar click, click, click, and he was quite prepared to swear he saw the handle of the instrument working rapidly on its own account, and evidently sending off a message somewhere. He was so taken aback, and, indeed, frightened, that for some moments he could not move, and when at last he recovered himself sufficiently to spring forward, the movement of the handle had ceased, and the message, what-

ever it was, speeding to its destination. He was sure, from the short time it took in sending, the message was one of very few words, and I need not say that, as telegraph clerks are unaccustomed to seeing their instruments worked by invisible agency, he was very much puzzled, but decided not to report the occurrence for fear his superiors should think he had been drinking. I gave him a couple of sovereigns, and begged him to say nothing about it. Afterwards I enquired at the other end, and found the message had been forwarded in an ordinary way. So that in spite of my disbelief in anything supernatural I could only come to one conclusion."

"It is very strange," said Frank. "So you think—"

"I think that poor old Bobbett's ghost flew at once to the telegraph-office and managed to send off that important message to his old partner and friend. Bobbett was a very clever man, and no doubt his ghost was cleverer than other people's ghosts."

"So that in the general confusion it managed to evade pursuit for a few moments?"

Hopkins made no reply.

"But," I asked, "have you any reason for thinking that ghosts in general, or Bobbett's ghost in particular, are endued with a knowledge of the Morse alphabet?"

"I have told you before," said Hopkins with crushing solemnity, "that Bobbett was a clever man, and knew most things."

"Well, what about the what-d'ye-call-ems—the young women, the Marthas?" asked Frank.

"I waited some days before I closed the account, hoping that Bobbett might send me instructions about them somehow, but as I heard nothing from him, I bought them back at ten per cent. less."

"That I suppose means a satisfactory conclusion, and you netted something?"

"Three thousand pounds. It ought to have been more had I dared to wait; for they fell fifteen before they stopped. Perhaps," added Hopkins thoughtfully and regretfully, "had I waited till then, Bobbett would have sent me a message to close."

He said this in such serious good faith, that we stared at one another. When we recovered from our astonishment, I asked:

"That profit, of course, went into the partnership account?"

"Of course it did, sir," replied Hopkins almost angrily. "After deducting my

travelling expenses I passed his share to his credit."

"And I hope," said Frank, with a solemn face, "you paid the company the shilling for the telegraphic message which Mr. Bobbett sent without their permission."

Hopkins rose with a manner almost dignified.

"Mr. Blair," he said, "this is the one subject I never jest upon. I have told you, in the simplest language, a strange, but a true tale, and will now wish you good-night."

So saying he went.

Frank, rather huffed at his last words, only shook hands with our departing guest, but I conducted him downstairs and saw him out. As I closed the door I heard a tremendous grunt; indeed so loud was it I thought it must be a summons for re-admittance. I opened the door again, and, to my surprise, saw Hopkins leaning against the railings, with every muscle of his broad back in motion. I was quite alarmed, and said hastily:

"Are you ill, old fellow?"

The quivering motion ceased, and Hopkins turned round and looked up at me, and his great face, under the lamplight, was empty of expression as ever.

"No; only the recollection of those things I told you always upsets me. Good-night. Poor old Bobbett!"

"Strange tale, Frank," I said, when having closed the door on Hopkins's departing sigh, we settled down once more.

"Very. Had anyone else but Hopkins told it, I shouldn't have believed a word of it; but he could no more invent it than he could paint my Alexander and Thais."

"How do you account for it?"

"Can't account for it. The only explanation I can see is, that Bobbett, who must have been no end of a rascal, laid some plan for wrecking the trains, and arranged to have the telegram sent off previously. But then he was in the train, and was smashed up himself, so that won't do."

"I have seen it asserted," I said, "in a book on spiritual influences, that a person dying, and thinking of someone at a distance, has been able to make a sort of resemblance of himself appear to that someone. Bobbett's thoughts, directly the smash came, may have turned to his one passion—speculating, and acted somewhat in the same way."

"Nonsense!" said Frank; "that won't hold water. I can't account for it."

"Neither can I."

And we never did. Hopkins declined to talk any more upon the subject, which he said was a painful one to him, so we soon ceased to think about it.

And yet there is one thing that puzzles me. Some years afterwards I spoke about Hopkins and his peculiarities, or rather lack of peculiarities, to a mutual friend, when suddenly remembering his tale, I said:

"By-the-bye, did you know his late partner Bobbett?"

"Oh yes; very well—sharp man he was too!"

"Killed in a railway accident, I believe?"

"No; he died in his bed like other people, and left a lot of money behind him."

Now this piece of information, coupled with the recollection of Hopkins as I saw him, leaning against the railings outside the front door, quivering with strange emotion, caused a feeling of uneasiness in my mind, and sometimes now, in spite of his unmeaning features and commonplace demeanour, I ask myself, in confidence: "Were we wrong after all, and did Hopkins possess imagination?"

### THE JEW IN RUSSIA.

GOLD was never hateful. There never was a time, and there never was a race free from the worship of that Diva Pecunia, that Glittering Idol, to which homage was paid by practical, hard-headed Rome. Fashions might vary, the mood of a people might be warlike or mild, but there was sure to exist a strong competitive instinct for the time-honoured practice of making more money than one's neighbour. And Asia, in old days, was the mother of trade, as of all arts of peace or war. Those were Asiatic merchants who, as a matter of pure business, bought Joseph from his brethren and resold their bargain in Egypt. Long before there was a Troy to be taken, or a Greek army to besiege, or a Homer to sing it, the steady patient caravans had plodded over desert and steppe. But nobody, in classic times, if we except the Roman spite against that Carthaginian rival whose costly wares, whose gold and purple and cunning handiwork sparkled in every mart, hated the money-maker. They might rob him. That was but natural. But they did not hate him. Cyrus must have been simply glad that Croesus was so rich, and the hardy Persian victors may have felt a sneaking kindness for the soft luxurious

Lydians whom they plundered. It is not till we reach the Middle Ages that we find capitalists existing as a class, and, as a class, especially odious to the community at large, from the king on his throne to the serf between the plough-stilts. There were several reasons for this.

We who have the happiness to live in an era of gas, electricity, railways, and a cheap press, find it hard to realise how very dark the Dark Ages were. A society without a post-office, without a newspaper, dependent on pack-horses for its supply of everything save the beef, beer, and bread to be bought from near neighbours, would seem in our eyes pitiable indeed. To our grandfathers and grandmothers the state of things appeared very differently. To an English lady of any reign between those of Henry Fitz Empress and Her Highness Elizabeth, it would have appeared quite natural that Autolycus, the pedlar, with his smooth tongue and glittering gewgaws and rare foreign silks and laces, should represent the modern linen-draper, and credit be as yet a plant in the bud. When money was wanted, real, downright, ringing money, as for the purchase of fat lands needed by an abbey, or by a king, the goldsmiths had to furnish it. And the goldsmiths, if not Jews, were sure to be Lombards—from whom we get the three gilded balls which still, in England, but nowhere else, decorate a pawnbroker's shop, or Flemings, or Venetians, or, in nine cases out of ten, Jews. And hence it came to pass that the Jew, rich, supple, ready to make a profit wherever a profit could be made, was especially odious in mediæval days.

Our ancestors were good haters. The first Crusaders—not the knightly crowd whom Baldwin and his colleagues led to the capture of Jerusalem, but the furious mob that responded to the preachings of Peter the Hermit—fell tooth and nail upon the Jews in every town of Lower Austria and Hungary, as they straggled on blindly towards that unknown Asia whence so few were to return. The Turks, Arabs, Saracens were far away. But there were the Jews. There were the monsters, who, if they did not worship Mahound and Ter-magant, had, at least, crucified the Saviour of Mankind. And the battle-rage of the wild fanatics, who afterwards died of Danube fever, of hunger, dysentery, plague, spent itself in outrages on the peaceable race that had clustered in the cities which stud the Danube. It is not difficult to comprehend the dull vehement spite, the

coarse anger of these Flemings and French and Germans, against the infidel who lay within their clutch. The Turk was far away, but the Jew was near. Wherever a Hebrew colony had settled, along the track of the first wild march of the crusading rabble, Jews suffered, as they suffer now in Russia and Roumania, and wherever the Jew-baiting spirit prevails.

There would have been no chance for the Jew, at the very first, had not his existence been convenient to knights and nobles and sovereign princes. He was a money-lender, a money-finder, when, but for his despised self, there might not have been a bag of gold besants, crowns, rials, to pay the stipulated price of the good broad acres, of the solid white woolpacks, of the freights of golden wheat and brown barley which in England were so often changing hands, now to the foreigner, now to the home purchaser. The story about King John's drawing the teeth of a Jew, one by one, to screw out of the imprisoned and tortured wretch where his hoards lay hid, may or may not be true. It is quite in accordance with what the monkish historians tell us of that light-hearted monarch's character. But there is no doubt as to the terrible tragedy at the coronation of John's mighty brother, Richard of the Lion Heart, when the Jews beleaguered in York Castle preferred to perish, they, their wives, their children, and their goods, rather than fall into the cruel hands of the infuriated populace without.

Milder times succeeded to those stormy ones which attended the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth centuries. The Jews, at the request or prayer of the City of London, were, in the reign of our gracious lord, Edward the Third, expelled from England. That warlike king whose royal fingers were dipped into every purse within reach, had, as the French phrase goes, nothing to refuse to the citizens of London, his liege subjects and his creditors. He sent them reports from the battle-field. He dined in their Guild-hall whenever he could. He knighted their mayors, and gained a personal popularity amongst them, but, doubtless, when he turned out the Jews, at their request, he did it with regret. A century later, Spain, Portugal, Flanders drove out their Jews, and it was not until after the Revolution of 1688 that a Hebrew could lawfully show his face in London. Shakespeare's Shylock must have been drawn from an alien model, some Dutch or German Jew,



tolerated amongst us, under the "privilege letters" of some ambassador, for awhile, but otherwise impossible in the England of Elizabeth and James the First. That there has been no national animosity to the Jews among us since the time of William the Silent is, perhaps, due to the fact of our commercial activity and wealth. In such a bustling community as our own, in such a city as great roaring London, the Jew, for some hundred and fifty years, was indeed heard of, but always in a subordinate position. Petticoat Lane did not annoy Lombard Street. The money-grubbers of the Minorities were forgotten or despised by the "warm men" on 'Change. A little jealousy has been created by the claim of an English Jew to sit in Parliament, but, on the whole, the rising position of the oriental colonist has been regarded rather with amusement than with ill-will. In France, again, the Jew has been welcome, and to him the highest offices of State have been open, for was he not an embodied protest against the Church and State system of the past, a flesh and blood exemplification of the immortal principles of 1789? But there are few Jews in France, fewer in England, whereas they are many in Germany, and very many in Russia, Poland, and Roumania. There, and there only, in Eastern Europe does there exist real hearty hatred against the Jews, nor will the explanation of the fact be difficult. Among lazy, careless, brandy-drinking peasants, such as swarm from the Neva to the Theiss, the Jew is almost a necessity, since buying and selling, borrowing and lending, must somehow go on. Isaac keeps the village tavern, Issachar the village shop, while Simeon is the grain-merchant who buys the wheat of the grumbling moujiks, and sells it, at a very different price, in far-off marts. It is a Jewish distiller who brews the vile corn-brandy, heavily taxed by government, which poisons and maddens the Russian peasant, but which furnishes him with the only pleasure he knows. It is a Hebrew who retails it, and whom sullen drunkards accuse of adding unduly to the score of honest toppers, while, with Semitic obstinacy, he keeps sober in their midst. Everywhere decent substantial dwellings arise in the midst of the sprawling low-roofed huts of Muscovy and the cleaner cabins of Red Russia, houses with French clocks and mirrors, German upholstery, English carpets, but these are for the Jew. In each town, insensibly, the shops of Christians are

closed, and when the shutters are taken down once more, it is a Jew's stock-in-trade that appears in the ill-glazed windows. The carriers, the cattle-dealers, the purveyors of foreign finery, wines, and comestibles, are sure to be Jews, since to carry on these trades needs capital and a business aptitude which Jews alone possess.

These new outbursts, dating from some five years back, against the numerous Jews of Eastern Europe, are, of course, a mere reproduction of old prejudice, old hate, which it was thought and hoped had died out long ago under the gentle influence of modern civilisation. It seems strange to us, amongst whom the Hebrew attracts little notice, save on rare occasions, to conceive a social system wherein, as in Prussia, Poland, Russia, or Roumania, the lower strata of the community are kept in a perpetual condition of feverish and envious unrest, because of the sharper wits and fuller purses of the Jews who monopolise three-fourths of the occupations of civil life. The spiteful and savage persecution to which the alien race have been subjected calls forth a natural and generous sympathy among Englishmen who are accustomed to side with the oppressed, and who, in many cases, have forgotten, and in others have never learned, the sad stories of the past, when York and London, Buda and Cologne, saw their gutters running red with the blood of murdered Jews. In both periods the same causes have produced the same results. In one respect, even in Russia and in Poland, manners have grown milder.

Actual outrages, bad as they are, are slight and partial compared with the wholesale butchery mentioned by monkish chroniclers. It is the Jew's property, rather than his person, which is now the main object of attack, and by incendiarism, plunder, and wanton destruction, the resentful Slavonic tribes are doing all they can to ruin and expel the patient, long-headed, supple stranger, tolerated but abhorred, who has dwelt for centuries within the gates of his enemy.

## JACK DOYLE'S DAUGHTER.

BY E. E. FRANKILLON.

### PART IV. PHOEBE'S FORTUNE.

#### CHAPTER XI. OMNIA MUTANTUR.

SIR CHARLES BASSETT and his son came up to town together, but with very different and even with discordant designs. For



once, a father was filled with remorse for having cultivated his son's ideas of honour too nicely. Everything had gone wrong. If that detestable pretender had not happened to see Ralph alone, he might have been dealt with—bought out, crushed out, kicked out, tricked out—but it was too late now. Ralph took a painfully simple view of the case, that right was right, even when it was on the side of a rascal. Nor could Sir Charles controvert the maxim outwardly and in set terms.

But he had not come to town for nothing, nor only that he might keep his eyes on his son's self-destructive proceedings. He knew perfectly well that Ralph was engaged in a search for the hostile heir—a thief, as a forger's heir had a natural right to be—and he did not suppose that the search would be in vain. He certainly meant that the police should have something to do with the discovery so soon as it was made, but meanwhile his true object in coming to London was to play a hand of cards, of which his son need know nothing till the game was won. And, of all persons in the world, it was Mrs. Hassock who had put them into his hands.

"It is a most extraordinary story," said Urquhart; "most extraordinary, Bassett, upon my word." Sir Charles had taken advantage of some evening engagement of Ralph's to open the pack before the eyes of one who could advise upon the course of the game both as a lawyer and as a friend.

"Of course extraordinary stories are the commonest things there are—as nobody in his senses will deny; but the great thing is to put them so that common-sense mayn't take fright—and common-sense is the most sensitive of all human faculties. I should like to see the lady myself, before I know what to say."

"Mrs. Hassock? It was to see her for yourself that I asked you here. I've had her on the premises this hour, ready to be produced as soon as she was wanted. Shall we have her up now?"

"I think we will. But wait a minute, while I go over the case of the other side. Two successive baronets, Sir Mordaunt and his brother, die without a will. The heir-at-law is Rayner Bassett, if alive. He has disappeared for the very obvious reason that he is wanted for forgery. But there's no evidence of his death, in spite of every enquiry made at the proper time—that is to say when Sir Mordaunt's brother died. Of course the absence of evidence that he did die gives no actual presumption that

he didn't die. However, there appears a person claiming to be Sir Rayner Bassett, with a story which certainly from his point of view accounts for everything. Nor have all your enquiries, as you tell me, discovered any inconsistent personal antecedents about the man, or thrown the least doubt upon the literal truth of his story, which in itself, considering all the circumstances of the case, and the man's own character, natural and acquired, is perfectly easy to make even a jury comprehend. Of course the burden of proof is on him; but beyond shaking his claim to be believed on his oath, so far as it may be unsupported, there's nothing you can disprove or deny. If the man's not Rayner Bassett, he's nobody. That at least seems clear. And his second marriage was valid enough to make this Philip Nelson his heir—that seems clear too."

"I mustn't have you against me, Urquhart—and that's clear, anyhow."

"But then comes Mistress Hassock, with her story. And if that's true, Rayner Bassett—not to speak as a lawyer, but as a student of psychology—Rayner Bassett is either no more heir to Cautleigh Hall than I am, or else he's heir to the gallows."

"Are you ready for the lady now?" asked Sir Charles, with his hand upon the bell.

"Do you mind telling me what you propose to do?"

"About my rights and my son's? Hold to them—hold to them through thick and thin, through right and— No, I don't mean that, of course, but—strictly. If what I suspect be true, I have a hold upon the man stronger than the knowledge that his son is a thief and he a forger. No; it would not be my duty to inform against my own uncle and have him hanged. But it would assuredly be my duty to keep Cautleigh Hall and the name of Bassett from murderers and thieves. That's why I come to you for advice, because, though you're a lawyer, you understand other things beside law." He did not add, "And because I can make you advise me whatever I please," though that was no small source of the professional success of Mrs. Urquhart's husband. So Urquhart accepted the compliment as paid to his skill in the study of human nature, and bowed.

"But suppose," he suggested, "your suspicion is wrong?"

"You—a psychologist! What happens when a young man and a maid are thrown together? What makes a third, without spoiling company?"

"A certain awkwardness," said Urquhart, "beyond doubt; but how that will straighten matters I fail to see."

"Was awkwardness all that came between you and your wife before you married her? Did you never, in the course of your philosophy, come on such a word as 'love,' Urquhart? Then, if not, and my suspicion be wrong, you have something still left to see and learn."

"I think we'll have in Mrs. Hassock now," said Urquhart a little stiffly. "But I have never studied what's just moonshine. In my opinion, love is just a non-existent thing."

"And Mrs. Urquhart?" asked Sir Charles, ringing the bell. "Does she say the same?"

"Precisely the same," said he.

"Ask Mrs. Hassock to come upstairs. Mrs. Hassock, this gentleman is a friend of mine, who wishes to hear from your own lips the story that you have told to me. Sit down. Kindly tell him the whole story, from beginning to end, in your own way."

Mrs. Hassock curtsied with her usual dignity, and took a chair.

"On the contrary, Mrs. Hassock," said Urquhart, "you will please to tell your story my way. To begin with—did you ever see me before?"

"Gracious, sir! No!"

"Never in all your life?"

"I beg your pardon, sir, but you were so sudden, you took my breath away. Of course, you're Mr. Urquhart, that was staying with me in Lincolnshire. I hope Mrs. Urquhart is very well?"

"I ask you, Mrs. Hassock, did you ever see me before you were at Cautleigh Hall?"

"No, sir. Never, in all my born days."

"Then I may tell you that if you make the smallest slip or blunder, or departure from the strictest accuracy in your account of what happened in Gray's Inn Gardens, I shall be able to correct you, for I was there. Do you understand?"

"What, sir! Was you ever a young man like them?"

Urquhart eyed her keenly, from bonnet to boots, and up again.

"If I were not aware," he said, "of the effects of time, I would ask you, madam, if you were ever a young girl who indulged in unseemly levity with absolutely casual young men, though not with me; and whose development I should never have expected to find in you."

"Certainly," said Sir Charles, "to associate the idea of levity of demeanour with this lady, does seem rather contrary to nature. So never mind, Mrs. Hassock; you see my friend is really paying you a high compliment, amply deserved."

"Anyhow, sir, as you say," said Mrs. Hassock, stiffening and reddening, "though girls can't be expected to be their grandmothers, it wasn't with you I ever ran giddy. And I should think not," she added, conscious of having held her own.

"Keep to the point, Mrs. Hassock, if you please. I tell you I remember that girl as if it were yesterday—a foolish frivolous young thing, and I see you, a staid, and, to all appearance, most respectable person; and I cannot see even so much likeness as a hundred years would fail to destroy. Are you the girl who, from Gray's Inn Gardens, handed a child through a back window of Gray's Inn Square: aye or no?"

"I was," said she; "and that I told Sir Charles."

"When a Bassett," said Sir Charles, "can degrade himself to an Uncle Rayner—a gentleman into a vulgarscamp, I don't see why an ordinary enough nurse-girl shouldn't grow up into the model house-keeper. Everybody must have a beginning, Urquhart, and—well, take the identity proved."

"Admitted, if you like, Bassett; but proved—no. Well, Mrs. Hassock, we admit that you are that girl. Was the child male or female, Mrs. Hassock, if you please?"

"It was a female girl."

"Well, and why did you leave that baby there, among those young men, unclaimed?"

"I'll tell you the truth, sir; I may, for 'twas no fault of mine. I was only a girl. I meant to have my joke at the cost of those young men."

She paused. The idea of Mrs. Hassock's having been, at any period of her existence, a practical jester, must have struck even herself as incredible. But those of us who watch ourselves with the detestable habit of self-consciousness, have no need to reach even so far as forty years old before finding out that what we have been has very little to do with what we are.

If Urquhart had never learned his Rochefoucauld by heart, he was, as a student of human nature, a dunce and impostor, and therein he would have

remembered a passage to the effect that at every new stage of life we have to learn the world and ourselves all over again, and if we have learned some trifle of wisdom, throw past experience and self-knowledge clean away. Phoebe could have taught him better, who had run through a dozen stages in as many months, or fewer. But self-consciousness was not Mrs. Hassock's foible; so she paused, and stared to find herself speaking in a strange language about things that were strange to her, now that she was no longer young, nor frisky, nor fresh, nor thin.

"So I went out into Holborn," said she at last, "and had a look at the shops without the baby; and when I went back the gates were shut, and I'd forgot the number in the square."

"If you were on your oath, Mrs. Hassock," said Urquhart, "I would remind you that, at a knock, the gates would have been opened, and that you could have called at every number in the square."

"I didn't, then."

"And in the name of common-sense, why?"

"Pray answer," said Sir Charles. "We have all had our follies. You will have no harm."

"And it was a folly, but 'twas nothing more. It was a——"

"Out with it, Mrs. Hassock," said Sir Charles. "It was a young man."

"Lord, sir, however do you know that?" asked she. "I never told you that."

"Because, you see, I knew it without having to ask you. Perhaps you can tell me a case of a young woman getting into trouble without the help of a young man."

"There, then—I did chance to meet a friend who chanced to be passing Holborn way, and what with one thing and another, time slipped by."

"Come, Urquhart," said Sir Charles, "I don't think you need press the lady as to why she never came back for the child. I expect she has herself forgotten that she was ever a young woman who, having stayed out too late at night, and having neglected her duty, lost her head, and was afraid to go home. It was all perfectly natural, Mrs. Hassock. Indeed, Urquhart, who has human nature at the tips of his fingers, sees it all, just as if he had himself been that young friend of yours."

"Maybe," said Urquhart; "but why no steps were taken for the recovery of the child by her natural guardians I fail to

perceive. Who were her parents—eh? We must get to the point now."

"I will tell you, sir. It's true enough I didn't dare to go home, for 'twas my first place, and my mistress was a Bengal tiger—I've lived in Indian families since, so I know their ways. But she wasn't the mother of that child. She was naught but its aunt, and must have been twenty years older than the mother could have been that died when the child was born. But I wasn't so much afraid of what she'd think of the child as of what she'd think of me, and her sending me off home without a character. I should think it's like enough she'd have made a fuss, if it hadn't so happened, as I heard tell a week after, she'd been took with a stroke—'twas the third—and that did for her."

"Well?"

"It was the young man heard that—John Hassock was his name, that I married after—so he kindly went to the house to see after my things. I was the only servant, and he'd been at work on the premises for the landlord, and when he got my belongings, and brought them back, they got mixed with odds and ends, as things will when you're collecting one person's out from among another's. Of course he couldn't tell for certain which was hers and which was mine, till he'd brought them to me to see; so he said everything was mine that he doubted of, and brought them all."

"Like a good man of business," said Sir Charles. "Well?"

"Well, sir, he wasn't far out, for the only things that weren't mine were just odds and ends—mostly parcels of letters and papers tied up with string. He was vexed when he found he'd carried off a pack of rubbish, of no sort of use nor value. But he and a friend had a spell over the letters and things, and he thought better of selling them off for waste paper. His very last words to me was, 'You keep to the documents and never let 'em out of your hands. There'll be people after that young one some day, and then they'll be worth a bank-note apiece, or my name's not John.' And then he died; and those were his very latest words."

"And those papers were——"

"Letters and things, and married-lines. John Hassock used to read 'em over every Sunday, thinking how to make 'em come in of use; but he was taken before he could see his way. And every Sunday afternoon he used to say the same thing, and 'twas



always true. 'That baby you lost,' said he, 'was the child of Sir Mordaunt Bassett, Bart., married as regular as clock-work by the married-lines, though as dark as a lantern. That's the way when a poor girl marries a swell. First he's 'shamed of her, and then sick of her, and he hides her in a hole that he peeps into as little as he can.' John Hassock, he used to read the papers, and he knew the ways of the world. 'These lines and these letters,' said he, 'are plain as your face that Sir Mordaunt Bassett, Bart., is lawful father of that blessed child.'

"That," said Urquhart, "is scarcely for a layman to say. So you have never let these documents out of your hands. Where are they now?"

"In my black reticule, that I never went without a single hour—my reticule that was stole by Miss Doyle. And I say it is hard, just when, being asleep outside a window, I chanced by an accident to hear that child's wanted, the papers to prove it aren't there. But if that Miss Doyle wants to put in her oar, Sir Charles can't deny how 'twas I told him the story first, or how the letters and things are mine, that I've been keeping safe and honest for this very day. 'Twas Providence put me behind that window; and 'tis flying against Providence to take and hide my reticule, as if that Miss Doyle was born a magpie."

"So the long and the short of it is," said Sir Charles, "that—if this tale be true, as no doubt Mrs. Hassock believes it to be—the reason of my cousin Mordaunt's single life and intestacy are pretty clear. No doubt he was entangled and was ashamed of it, and couldn't bring himself to do justice till death put it out of his power. Observe, however, that this girl was Mordaunt Bassett's only child, according to Mrs. Hassock's tale as told to me. The mother died in giving birth to her first-born. And now you see the hold I have on my uncle Rayner. If the girl be alive, and his account of her death (having discovered her identity) a lie, then his claims are at an end. If she be dead—then you know what I believe. An uncle like that, in sole charge of a helpless child who stands in his way, is a dangerous man. The question is, how to

find Miss Doyle, for both Jack Doyle and his daughter are missing too. I wish, Urquhart, we had done our duty by that baby better—you and I. Ralph and she might have been man and wife by now. Look at that sketch, Mrs. Hassock, and see if you see any likeness to anyone. It's a sketch, Urquhart, made by Esdaile, whom Lawrence happens to know, and whom, of late, Ralph, through Lawrence, also knows."

"That is the baby," said Mrs. Hassock. "A trifle older, but the same."

"You're right; that is the child. And, Urquhart, there is another curious story too. Esdaile is painting about twenty studies of a girl whom he has picked up somewhere on the sole score of her grown-up identity with the subject of that very sketch in Mrs. Hassock's hand. And Lawrence has told Ralph, and Ralph has told me, that the girl is the exact double of Miss Phoebe Doyle. Mrs. Hassock, I am talking to you as well as to my friend. You remember Jack Doyle, Urquhart—a blackguard who would do anything for the price of a glass of brandy. If that child be not dead, she must be concealed. And where would a scamp like Uncle Rayner find a better accomplice, a better tool than in a blackguard like Jack Doyle? And now, you see, the man and the girl have disappeared, precisely when Uncle Rayner desires most that not a trace of them should be found."

"Miss Doyle—from India!"

"Ask Mrs. Urquhart if an Indian girl would never have heard of a rupee. Ask anybody's common-sense—ask your own knowledge of human nature—if, accepting the alleged evidence of the letters, the girl whom you knew as Phoebe Doyle be not the child whom we called Marion Burden, and if that child be not Mordaunt Bassett's heir. You shall give me your advice when Mrs. Hassock is gone. Meanwhile, I intend to do right. Nobody shall be able to accuse me of trying to keep even my own for even a day at the expense of the rightful heir. Enough that Rayner Bassett is not, and cannot, and shall not be that heir. Urquhart, I ought to have been appointed that child's father, not he. But henceforth I will be her father, and I am, if she be alive."

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